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LSG Policy Report: 2020 Census Data and Redistricting

August 19, 2021

LSG Colleagues and Supporters,

Last week, with the Census Bureau’s release of the final 2020 census data, another crucial voting rights battle, redistricting, moved a step closer on the legislative calendar. The census data in this report is provided to help you prepare for a sustained redistricting effort that demands fair and equal representation for all Texans.

Although Texas was one of only three states that did not fund a complete count effort, our state population increased by more than four million residents during the last decade, the most of any state. Most importantly, when it comes to redistricting, 95% of Texas population growth was fueled by people of color, while the “Non- Hispanic White” (Anglo) population increased by only 187,252, barely enough people than needed to populate just one of the 150 Texas House districts.

The impact of the rapid growth of a diverse urban and suburban population is best exhibited by the fact that such growth is the only reason that we will have the opportunity to draw two additional congressional districts. A congressional plan that produces anything less than two additional minority opportunity seats would clearly indicate an intentional discriminatory effort to deny representation to the Texans who are driving our population and economic growth.

With regard to legislative redistricting, in this report we have provided charts and data that summarize the implications of the census count at the statewide level and for key counties. The Texas Legislative Council has also posted the 2020 census population for each Texas House district at redistricting.capitol.texas.gov. Just click on the link in the red bar at the top of the page.

Thank you,

Rep. Garnet F. Coleman
Chair, Legislative Study Group

LSG Policy Report: 2020 Census Data and Redistricting

Who Will Draw the Districts and When?

- Congressional districts must be drawn by the Legislature and the Governor has indicated he will call a special session this fall for that purpose.
- Delays in completing the 2020 census, due in large part to the pandemic and attempts to politicize the count by the Trump administration, have created uncertainty because

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state law says that legislative redistricting must be done by the Legislature "at its first **regular session** after the publication of each United States decennial census." However, the census data needed to draw new maps was not published until after the 87th regular session, so the first regular session after the census data was published will convene in 2023. Had the legislature tried and failed to complete legislative redistricting during the session, the task would have gone to the Legislative Redistricting Board (LRB), but the census delay made that impossible. How the process is untangled must be resolved, because failure to redraw the lines would likely lead to a one person, one vote challenge due to population inequities among current districts.

- Ultimately, both state and federal court challenges are certain to be filed given the state’s unbroken streak of producing redistricting plans that have been found to violate voting rights provisions, and legislators have always played an important role in developing the legal basis for those challenges.

The Impact of the 2020 Census on Texas Redistricting

Texas Population and Growth in Population by Race						
	2010	% 2010	2020	% 2020	Increase	% Pop Growth
Hispanic or Latino	9,460,921	37.6%	11,441,717	39.3%	1,980,796	49.3%
Black or African American	2,979,598	11.8%	3,552,997	12.2%	573,399	14.3%
Non-Hispanic White	11,397,345	45.3%	11,584,597	39.7%	187,252	4.7%
Asian	964,596	3.8%	1,585,480	5.4%	620,884	15.4%
Total	25,145,561		29,145,505		4,019,768	

*% Pop Growth column represents the percentage of total population growth that racial group is responsible for.

As the census data in the charts makes clear, the 2020 census sends a clear message to mapmakers: the failure to produce redistricting plans that increase representation for people of color would be evidence of discriminatory intent, especially in congressional redistricting.

- The state population increased by 16%, and people of color are responsible 95% of the state’s four-million-person population increase – and that is the only reason Texas is getting two additional seats in Congress. State legislative redistricting will also be impacted by the rapid diversification of fast- growing suburban communities as well as major urban areas.
- While the state population has increased by 16% over the last decade, the Hispanic population has increased by 20.9%, the Black population by 19.2%, and the Asian population by 64.4%.
- By contrast, the “Non-Hispanic White” (Anglo) population increased by only 1.6% - or 187,252 - barely enough people to make up one of the 150 state House districts. Had the state population increased at the 1.6% rate of the Anglo population, Texas would have almost certainly lost a seat in Congress instead of gaining two.

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- Harris, Dallas, and Tarrant counties have actually had a net loss of Anglo population, while suburban counties that have seen a growth in Anglo population have still experienced a decrease in the percentage of population that is Anglo.

Key Counties

Harris County Population and Growth in Population by Race						
	2010	% 2010	2020	% 2020	Increase	% Pop Growth
Hispanic or Latino	1,671,540	40.8%	2,034,709	43.0%	363,169	56.9%
Black or African American	775,492	18.9%	907,063	19.2%	131,571	20.6%
Non-Hispanic White	1,349,646	33.0%	1,309,593	27.7%	-40,053	-6.3%
Asian	252,032	6.2%	344,762	7.3%	205,398	32.2%
Total	4,092,459		4,731,145		638,686	

Dallas County Population and Growth in Population by Race						
	2010	% 2010	2020	% 2020	Increase	% Pop Growth
Hispanic or Latino	905,940	38.3%	1,057,835	40.5%	151,895	61.9%
Black or African American	528,200	22.3%	574,183	22.0%	45,983	18.7%
Non-Hispanic White	784,693	33.1%	724,987	27.7%	-59,706	-24.3%
Asian	119,250	5.0%	181,314	6.9%	121,488	49.5%
Total	2,368,139		2,613,539		245,400	

Tarrant County Population and Growth in Population by Race						
	2010	% 2010	2020	% 2020	Increase	% Pop Growth
Hispanic or Latino	482,977	26.7%	620,907	29.4%	137,930	45.7%
Black or African American	268,983	14.9%	366,727	17.4%	97,744	32.4%
Non-Hispanic White	937,135	51.8%	904,884	42.9%	-32,251	-10.7%
Asian	84,561	4.7%	127,783	6.1%	113,146	37.5%
Total	1,809,034		2,110,640		301,606	

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Bexar County Population and Growth in Population by Race						
	2010	% 2010	2020	% 2020	Increase	% Pop Growth
Hispanic or Latino	1,006,958	58.7%	1,190,958	59.3%	184,000	62.5%
Black or African American	128,892	7.5%	161,307	8.0%	32,415	11.0%
Non-Hispanic White	519,123	30.3%	535,732	26.7%	16,609	5.6%
Asian	41,739	2.4%	65,217	3.2%	73,950	25.1%
Total	1,714,773		2,009,324		294,551	

Travis County Population and Growth in Population by Race						
	2010	% 2010	2020	% 2020	Increase	% Pop Growth
Hispanic or Latino	342,766	33.5%	421,110	32.6%	78,344	29.5%
Black or African American	87,308	8.5%	101,267	7.8%	13,959	5.2%
Non-Hispanic White	517,644	50.5%	612,824	47.5%	95,180	35.8%
Asian	59,333	5.8%	101,038	7.8%	41,705	15.7%
Total	1,024,266		1,290,188		265,922	

Denton County Population and Growth in Population by Race						
	2010	% 2010	2020	% 2020	Increase	% Pop Growth
Hispanic or Latino	120,836	18.2%	182,778	20.2%	61,942	25.4%
Black or African American	55,534	8.4%	97,847	10.8%	42,313	17.4%
Non-Hispanic White	426,887	64.4%	485,646	53.6%	58,759	24.1%
Asian	43,478	6.6%	93,463	10.3%	49,985	20.5%
Total	662,614		906,422		243,808	

Fort Bend County Population and Growth in Population by Race						
	2010	% 2010	2020	% 2020	Increase	% Pop Growth
Hispanic or Latino	138,967	23.7%	198,580	24.1%	59,613	25.1%
Black or African American	125,818	21.5%	170,978	20.8%	45,160	19.0%
Non-Hispanic White	211,680	36.2%	243,726	29.6%	32,046	13.5%
Asian	99,370	17%	182,537	22.2%	83,167	35.0%
Total	585,375		822,779		237,404	

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Williamson County Population and Growth in Population by Race						
	2010	% 2010	2020	% 2020	Increase	% Pop Growth
Hispanic or Latino	98,034	23.2%	147,088	24.2%	49,054	26.3%
Black or African American	26,196	6.2%	40,732	6.7%	14,536	7.8%
Non-Hispanic White	269,481	63.8%	336,410	55.2%	66,929	35.9%
Asian	20,433	4.8%	54,628	9.0%	34,195	18.4%
Total	422,679		609,017		186,338	

Nueces County Population and Growth in Population by Race						
	2010	% 2010	2020	% 2020	Increase	% Pop Growth
Hispanic or Latino	506,293	60.6%	217,052	61.5%	10,759	83.0%
Black or African American	13,637	4.0%	14,309	4.1%	672	5.2%
Non-Hispanic White	111,870	32.9%	106,165	30.1%	-5,705	-44.0%
Asian	5,731	1.7%	8,135	2.3%	2,404	18.6%
Total	340,223		353,178		12,955	

Jefferson County Population and Growth in Population by Race						
	2010	% 2010	2020	% 2020	Increase	% Pop Growth
Hispanic or Latino	42,899	17.0%	58,915	23.0%	16,016	376.6%
Black or African American	85,291	33.8%	84,835	33.1%	-456	-10.7%
Non-Hispanic White	112,503	44.6%	96,047	37.4%	-16,456	-386.9%
Asian	8,630	3.4%	10,080	3.9%	1,450	34.1%
Total	252,273		256,526		4,253	

Hays County Population and Growth in Population by Race						
	2010	% 2010	2020	% 2020	Increase	% Pop Growth
Hispanic or Latino	55,401	35.3%	92,871	38.5%	37,470	44.6%
Black or African American	5,536	3.5%	9,881	4.1%	4,345	5.2%
Non-Hispanic White	92,062	58.6%	121,568	50.4%	29,506	35.1%
Asian	1,821	1.2%	5,091	2.1%	3,270	3.9%
Total	157,107		241,067		83,960	

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The County Line Rule

A 10% *total* deviation is allowed for Texas legislative districts to accommodate the “county line rule,” a requirement that a statewide Texas House plan cut as few county lines as possible. The total deviation is the difference between the largest and the smallest House district. Inevitably, some districts must cross county lines and others, such as the most populous counties, need not.

Major Border Counties

Texas has four counties that are major population centers on the border: El Paso, Webb (Laredo), Hidalgo (McAllen and Edinburg), and Cameron (Brownsville and Harlingen). Unlike the other major urban/suburban counties, the predominantly Hispanic border counties have not experienced rapid diversification, but they have historically experienced population undercounts that lead to diminished representation and government funding.

The 10% total deviation allowed for Texas House districts under the “county line rule” could come into play this year to preserve representation for border communities that are located in protected, effective minority opportunity districts. Fortunately, the 5% over/under deviation is not an absolute requirement. Once all 150 districts are drawn, the 10% deviation could range from 4% over to 6% under deviation or any other amount totaling no more than 10%, but when drawing districts, the 5% over/under is a reasonable practice.

El Paso County – Although El Paso County had a population of 865,657, an increase of 65,010/8.1%, that increase is inadequate to maintain all five of its current Texas House districts wholly within the county. However, the population is also too large to have only four House districts in the county, so the fifth district will have to have an El Paso population base and fill out its population in rural counties east and southeast of El Paso County, many of which are also located in underpopulated and/or undercounted districts.

If the four remaining districts were drawn at ideal population of 193,040, the fifth El Paso based district would have only 89,537 residents in El Paso County, forcing it to find approximately 100,000 elsewhere, which would cause ripples throughout rural Texas. However, if the El Paso districts were drawn at 5% below ideal deviation, the fifth district would have an El Paso base of 126,006, forcing it to pick up only about 58,000 of additional population, an option that would benefit both El Paso and other districts subject to the ripple effects.

Webb County – With a 2020 census population of 267,114, an increase of only 16,810/6.7%, Webb County will continue to have one whole district and also provide population for a district in neighboring counties. Again, to the extent that the core Webb Co. district is drawn below the ideal population, there is more population to fill out neighboring Hispanic opportunity districts.

Hidalgo-Cameron – Currently, Hidalgo and Cameron counties, combined, have seven Texas House districts, including one shared district that crosses the Hidalgo-Cameron County line. The 2020 census count for Hidalgo Co. is 870,781 and Cameron Co. is 421,017, or a combined total of 1,291,798. If all seven districts were drawn at 5% below ideal deviation, their combined population would be 1,292,109, only 311 residents outside 5% deviation.

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